Appendices

1. Full Listing of Focus Group Comments

2. Focus Group Participants

3. Focus Group Agenda and Goals

4. Evaluative Data from Focus Group Participants

5. Background on the Focus Group Process

6. Priorities of Various High School Initiatives at Work in Arizona

7. Members of the AZHSRI Initiative State Team

Appendix 1 – Focus Group Comments

Following are the data from all of the focus group discussions. At the focus groups, facilitators captured individual comments on flip charts, both in large- and small-group discussions. Researchers at West Wind Enterprises then sorted comments from all four focus groups related to their responsiveness to the questions in each section of the agenda. Each section below includes comments made in direct response to the questions asked during that specific portion of the focus group agenda, as well as comments made randomly during discussion of other agenda items.

Within each section, researchers sorted the comments into common topical areas and rank ordered the topical areas by the frequency with which comments were given in each topic area. The number in parentheses behind each topical area is the number of times a comment related to that topic was placed on the focus group flip charts.

It is important to remember that these data are the result of specific, targeted inquiries. Thus, though they are of great utility, they are limited in that they are offered in response to specific questions, in a group setting, and in a session that was bounded by time. This necessarily limits the range of responses provided by participants. Participants' responses also reflect and are limited to their respective areas of expertise as they attempt to address direct questions. While focus group participants were given numerous opportunities to provide comments in different formats (large- and small-group discussions, written feedback forms, and post-focus group correspondence), the data below are what was taken from the group discussions. It is best to use these types of data and consequent recommendations as a foundation for action planning and further study, including the research of best practices and lessons learned in other fields. It is not prudent to limit subsequent deliberations to the results of these focus groups alone, but rather to use these results creatively to forecast, strategize, and customize partnerships and action plans.

EXPECTATIONS OF OUR STUDENTS

1. **Academic proficiency, but more than just basics and more than just reading and mathematics (11)**
   - Academic achievement, broadly understood
   - Preparation in traditional academics
   - Read well, write well, speak well
   - Proficient in English language, reading, writing, speaking
   - English- reading
   - Math – but at what level? Geometry, number sense
   - Basic understanding of history, govt., role of citizen
   - Wide variety of opportunities comprehensive education, not soley driven by the basics, arts, CTE
   - Well-roundedness
   - Understanding of
     o Law
     o Bookkeeping/basic accounting
     o Budgeting/taxes
     o Life skills
   - Fluency in a foreign language

1. **Prepared for College or Work (11)**
   - Prepared for college
   - Prepared for college in all subjects
   - High schools need to prepare students for college
   - Properly prepared to enter some form of post-sec ed
   - Recognize that not all students will go on to post sec
   - Career-related skills – whether going to college or workplace
   - How to connect interests to career(s)
   - Ready for a career
   - Prepared to enter either workplace or post sec
   - Ability to enter the workforce get additional training and learn to learn
   - Ability to thrive in the business world

3. **Life Long Learners (8)**
   - Life long learners
   - Students who can and want to learn
   - Curiosity/ joy of learning
   - Skills to pick up more training/education – like research skills, interpersonal
   - Able to learn and change
   - Learning to learn
   - Desire to continue learning
   - Experiential learning
     o Practical needs
     o <u>Experience</u> responsibility
     o School is part of/replication of society

4. **Habits and Dispositions (7)**
    - Work ethic
    - Work ethic
    - Belief that a better GPA matters
    - Sense to excel, stand out
    - Ability to persist, especially in face of failure
    - Don't give up
    - Ability to handle the work load so not overwhelmed

4. **Having a Goal/Plan (7)**
    - Students who know what they are prepared for
    - Students who have a goal
    - Ability to reflect on courses and know why they took them – purpose of class
    - Breakdown sense of being stuck
    - Vision of what want to do, goal
    - Sense of pride in what they plan to do
    - Have a plan

6. **Problem Solving/Reasoning (6)**
    - Problem solvers
    - Solve problems faced in life
    - Problem solving skills
    - High school model an ideal society
        o Solve problems faced in life
        o Tools – academics and service, etc
    - Able to think/analyze
    - Ability to reason and look at all sides "will to want"

7. **Be Successful (5)**
    - Productive members of community – support selves and society
    - Be successful in life
    - every student to excel at something
    - Productive, successful people
        o Work, prosper, raise family, taxpayer
    - If 5 years out, professional, successful

7. **Good Citizens/Upstanding Character (5)**
    - Citizenship
    - Sense of community and citizenship – be a good person on our planet
    - Ethical, active citizens
        o Who reach back/out to community esp. in a voluntary way
    - Strong ethical foundation
        o People defining "ethics" would be contentious
    - Character – sense of personal pride in own work, honesty, not cheating, not be focused on result to detriment of how got there, integrity

7. Sense of Self/Pride (5)
- Confidence
- Self-confidence, self-esteem
- Self-examination/self-worth – helps to be ready to be in world and do right
- Our high school graduates are proud of themselves
- Have own pride in accomplishments (each accomplishment)

7. Communication Skills (5)
- Communicators
- Effective communication with adults who have authority over them
- Good communication skills – verbal and written
- Able to communicate
- More openness to talking
    - Especially re: problems
    - Other ways of dealing with conflict, not just yelling

11. Life Skills (4)
- Prepared for life – life skills, prepared for work
- Basic life skills (i.e. balancing a check book)
- Prepared for the next stage in life
- Life skills

12. Technological Skills (2)
- Function in technological society – able to use computers
- Computer skills/keyboarding

12. Membership in a diverse society (2)
- Cultural Competency
    - Ability to work together with men and women of different ages, races, etc.
- Understanding diversity of society, prepared for it

Miscellaneous (5)
- Work in small groups – direct experience, represent real life
- Common sense
- Students willing to take risks
- Online, technology and info – know how to use and evaluate
- Prepared to excel in sports (society often has this expectation)

WHAT OUR STUDENTS NEED

1. **Good Teachers (13)**
   - Motivated and supportive teachers
   - Teachers with strong instructional teaching strategies
   - High quality teachers
     - o Content
     - o Pedagogy
   - Teachers who are connected with one another, as well as the student
   - Highly qualified and effective teachers
     - o Esp. math and science
     - o Vocational and technical
   - Teachers who care, who know me
   - Time with teachers
   - Teachers with more time to teach, less time on extraneous duties/tasks
   - Teachers willing to stay extra to help
   - Teachers who want to be in the classroom
   - Special programs for students at risk – enough teachers to reach all kids
   - Examples of different teaching to accommodate different learning styles, effective pedagogy
   - Recognizing how young people learn

2. **Solid Curriculum (9)**
   - Engagement in high quality content
   - Coherent curriculum that assures foundational knowledge – i.e. mathematics, articulation of foundations
   - New lesson plans, relevant curriculum
   - Relevant curriculum
   - Sometimes the increased academic course is not making connections, doesn't seem practical/important sense of being taught to pass (AP) test isn't enough
   - Classes that teach what we want them to learn
   - Teaching what students don't know
   - Electives – art teachers, music
   - All art forms integrated into curriculum

2. **Caring School Environment/Community (9)**
   - Safe, supportive, personalized
   - Caring environment – for all kids
   - People who:
     - o Care about them
     - o Know them
     - o Listen and respect interest and passions
   - Environment where faculty and staff believe all students can learn
   - Encouragement – belief they can seek higher goals
   - Sense of community – helps them care about what they are doing

- Support, like what families traditionally offer
    o More than academic subject matter
- Strong relationships with adults who help students identify their strengths
- Relationships/Connections

4. **Disciplined, Safe Environment (6)**
   - Environment for learning not always conducive when disorderly
       o Expectations that they have to listen to teacher
   - Leadership sets tone, provides conditions for higher learning environments
       o Parents make it tough
       o School Boards intervene sometimes inappropriately
   - Different physical environments can lead to great learning, but still are "orderly"
   - Palpable respect in some schools
       o Discipline stressed is self-discipline
   - Safety
   - Safe campuses

5. **Resources (5)**
   - Access to current and up-to-date technology and facilities
   - Clean schools, friendly learning environment
   - Better, newer materials/texts
   - Tools- esp. technology
   - Need tools, resources

5. **Individualized Instruction (5)**
   - Specialization- more focused on individual student interests
   - Student needs are very different from one another
   - IEPs[*] for <u>each</u> student
   - IEP for <u>every</u> student
   - No two-size fits all

5. **Extra-Curriculars (athletics, clubs) (5)**
   - Extra curriculars
   - Comprehensive curriculum that incorporates extra curricular, etc.
   - Athletics can keep kids in school
   - Student athletes (in that order) academics stressed first
   - Connectors for kids
       o Help them be connected to school community, i.e. clubs, athletics

8. **Parents Involved (4)**
   - Parents involved
   - Better communication between school and parents/homes
       o Some tools don't make the connection
   - In middle school, esp. high school parents not as involved
   - Involvement drops off partly <u>parent</u> response

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[*] Individualized Educational Plan

9. **Thinking Beyond High School (3)**
   - Knowledge about choice before them
     - i.e. state universities
     - different career paths based on different interests and abilities
   - Understanding long term consequences of actions – esp. regarding dropping out
   - See connections between academics and other aspects of life (career, free time, etc.)

10. **Flexible Schedule (2)**
   - Less rigidity/more flexibility re: more time for learning
   - Flexibility from system
     - Time, days, calendar

10. **Options (2)**
   - Students have opportunities for success – lots of options
   - Provide options

10. **High Expectations (2)**
   - High school more than minimal – allow all kids to do anything they want – increased sense kids can get as much education as possible
   - Students are challenged to reach potential

10. **Small Classes (2)**
   - Smaller classes
   - Small classes

10. **Relevance (2)**
   - Challenge, relevance
   - Connections to real world to see the relevance

10. **A Society that Sees Education as a Priority (2)**
   - Education a priority
   - Community schools- part of, focus of community

10. **School Problem Solving (2)**
   - Schools can solve problems, but are faced with more than any one can manage – need focus
   - Solve social ills our kids confront

Miscellaneous (9)
   - Guidance
   - Remediation that is supplemental
   - High schools need support of society – understanding of student needs, esp. regarding working students
   - What's new – using research-based programs – defining what's effective

What Our Students Need, continued

- Meet needs of students with disabilities
- "Gap year"
- Communication between employers and schools
    - o Connection between business and education communities
- Appreciation
    - o Teachers need to be appreciated, too
- Correct support system – tutoring, motivation

WHAT'S WORKING

1. **Effective, Caring Teachers (18)**
   - Learning communities of teachers
     o Reflecting on student work
     o Time
   - Teachers who connect
   - Elective teachers have better communication due to mutual interest
   - Smaller-team teaching like a family
   - Teacher teaming – standards help
   - Dedicated time to become a team
   - Contact information for staff!
   - Teacher can help each other's students
   - Examining student work samples together
   - Structured time for teams
   - Faculty genuinely care about students
   - In one school we were prepared, but because of exceptional teachers
   - Different strategies while teaching
   - Great teachers who honor relationships and increased expectations
   - Teacher involvement
   - Way you approach instruction can meet many goals
     o Can't just pile one thing on top of another
     o Meet multiple goals through instruction (like lesson study, like integrated writing)
   - Objective based instruction
   - Schools that scaffold instruction that keep doors open for all students

2. **Career and Technical Education (11)**
   - CTE
   - CTE
   - CTE move from "voc-tech"
   - High quality CTE
   - CTE provides vision/bridge to higher education and life
   - Encourages non-traditional roles
   - Learning standards in context, so career tech students doing well on AIMS
   - In some cases, connection of academics to CTE is good, sometimes not so "good" CTE students doing well on AIMS
   - Non-CTE aren't always getting career- tech integration
   - CTE could be integrated overall into regular high school
   - Voc-Ed

2. **Student Pride (11)**
   - Students id strongly with school
   - Students have pride in school
   - Desire to excel for themselves and school
   - Respect among students, staff

- Concern for the student especially from admin
- Sense of community among students
- School community between 2 campuses
- Sense of movement – teachers and students working together
- Pride in schools who do good w/ $ have but constant struggle
- Need more appreciation
- Culture of pride in school, students, and teachers <u>all</u> connected to school
    o Pride in who they are
    o Trust
    o Making hard decisions – respect and honesty – play fair

4. **Courageous Leadership (10)**
   - Courageous leadership
     o Believe every child can learn
     o Courage of your convictions esp. in face of community
     o Go to the mat for teachers
     o Increase morale
     o One who builds other leaders
     o Can recognize excellence and rewards it
     o "earned position"
        ▪ Respect
        ▪ Not administration
     o Need strong knowledge base and built system of support where not so strong
     o Lack of ego/strong ego
        ▪ So able to take it
        ▪ Confident enough in who I am that you can be better than me
   - Rethink develop system leadership creates buy in – develop good skills for good leadership
     o Teachers as part of a management team

5. **Mentoring (Primarily of Students) (9)**
   - AZ Quest for Kids – mentoring program
   - Mentoring programs
     o Parents- helping them
     o Students – tutoring, etc.
   - Advocacy- mentor becomes advocate
   - Mentoring can be people, external, internal, peers
     o Job's for AZ's grads
     o AZ's Quest for kids
   - Start at different grades – some @ 4th grade
   - Lost an advocate/resource (Arizona Mentoring Partnership)
   - No real $, role
   - Mentoring starting early
     o i.e. 1st graders have 5th/6th grade mentors

- Similar – Avid, TRIO, Gear Up
  o Pair adults with young people follow them through school, set goals, develop skills
  o Career, higher ed, leadership

5. **Standards (9)**
   - Identifying standards – consistency
   - Standards
     o Attention at building level sometimes makes it into classrooms/instruction
   - Standards help focus other co-curricular work
   - Common goals/objectives – instruction
   - Articulated academic standards which provide quality and equity for students
   - Emphasis on literacy and reading comprehension beginning to pay off
   - Common curricula across districts, help with mobility in town
   - Applying hands on learning
     o Physically involved
     o Active classrooms
   - Know all kids have right to access the standards

7. **Curriculum (7)**
   - <u>Integration</u> of academics, life skills, etc.
     o related to how teachers are teaching, caring environments, etc.
     o School-to-career and service learning integrated in whole school
   - Teacher academy (for students) – hands on learning
   - Writing across content areas- I now have many students write in math
   - Focusing on writing even (among non-L.A.teachers)
   - Foundational classes, exploratory – specific careers, guidance not left to chance
   - Emphasis on culture and language
   - Classrooms – esp. workplace skills, embedded curriculum

7. **Professional Development (7)**
   - Focused professional development on instruction
   - Follow-up on professional development
   - $ for subs to teachers get together – connections energy
   - Quality PD for staff and faculty
   - Grad courses for teachers regarding pedagogical knowledge
   - Teacher PD – tied to salary, school and (? Illegible)
   - Focused PD

7. **Within School Collaboration (7)**
   - Support and collaboration among all facets – faculty, admin, and students
   - Common language
   - Consistency
   - People in a better place
     o more collaboration among departments
     o teachers having serious discussion on content and instruction

- Staff morale, working environment
- Collaboration between faculty and community, faculty and students
- We were too competitive: school v school, teacher v teacher, now more cooperative

7. Parent Involvement (7)
- Parent felt welcomed to come in, speak with teachers, administrators, coaches
- Parental involvement
- Parental involvement
- Increased parent involvement
- Elected officials involved
- Leadership
- When parents are active can make better choices with child
    o Diversity of options to best meet kids needs

7. Small Class Size (7)
- Small classes
- Low student-teacher ratio
- Small classes
- Fewer kids, more time with teachers
- Small groups of students
- Building relationships
- Getting smaller

7. Community Involvement (7)
- Statewide, when business advocates for education
- Communication between 2 mobile communities
- Newsletters to community
- More communication
- Site-based concept to focus on school goals (community involvement plus teachers and students)
- More collaboration between community/schools
- # of resources – can pick and choose organizations willing to assist schools

13. Dual Enrollment/Transitions (6)
- Dual enrollment
- Dual enrollment/tech prep
- Dual enrollment/tech prep – community college opportunity
- Transition programs to college – getting college credit in high school including upward bound
- Smooth transition to post secondary
- Relationships between community colleges and high schools

13. Extra Curricular (6)
- Extra-curriculars
- Equal opportunities for students getting involved

- Student opportunities- clubs, to change the environment
- Extra curriculars – students involved have higher grades and attendance
- Co-curricular activities like FFA, FBLA
- Student leadership

13. Flexibility (6)
- Flexibility re:
  - o Learning styles
  - o Time
  - o Modes of delivery
  - o After school
  - o Options
  - o Co-curricular

13. Individualized Attention (6)
- Focus on individual students
- Individual attention
- More individualized attention to particular needs and wants
- addressing all students based on their needs
- Differentiated instruction
- Attention to alternative learning styles

17. Special Programs (5)
- Options within school systems
- Signature programs
- AP program where students are challenged and have hands-on opportunities [like they get in:]
  - o Band
  - o Voc ed
- High expectations in AP – need higher expectations for <u>all</u> kids – work ethic is improved when push
- Breadth of programming includes:
  - o Academics
  - o Extra-curricular

17. Assessment/AIMS (5)
- Overall coherent assessment system
- Use of data from test scores
  - o Gives way to make decisions, focus resources, targeting
- Decisions based on data
- AIMS sense of achievement- make it more personalized
- NCLB

17. Scheduling (5)
- Block scheduling – where it means time on task
- Certainty with calendar that incorporates seasonal mobility

- Calendars thoughtful re: tests and local choices
- Time to plan and make change
- Flexible hours

17. Diversity (5)
- Diverse student populations
- Diversity
- Ethnic and socio-economic diversity help students get to know others and is also a challenge
- Sensitivity – tolerance – sense of community
- Leadership camp among student cultures/clichés – harmony

21. Stakeholder Buy-In (4)
- Buy-in from stakeholders commitment; consistent – i.e. work toward common goal
- Feeling of attitude – staff buy-in
- stakeholders moving in same direction
- Bridge gap between all stakeholders

21. Choices (4)
- Courses that work best for student based on choice
- Choice
- Alternative choices not traditional
- Charter schools

21. Goals for students (4)
- Alignment of personal goals, curriculum, immediate tie to direct benefit
- Shared goals
- Dreams, visions, bigger picture
- Helps make connections between coursework and beyond

21. Relation with the real world (4)
- Programs/classes do real world work
- Relationship what happen in school to real life
- Internships
- Students actively involved in real world activities that help create own future (but not enough)

25. Learning (3)
- Learning
- leaders have a better understanding of how students learn
- Everyone is a learner; creating a culture to sustain the enterprise

26. Continuity with middle school (2)
- Collaboration with middle schools
  o Work together

- o Programs
- o Articulation
- Continuity among kids, middle → high
  - o Have some of the same teachers (middle and high in the same bldg.)

26. **Freshman Transition (2)**
    - Freshman mentoring program
      - o What's expected of them
      - o Questions
    - New freshman curriculum
      - o Year long social skills
      - o Maybe 55 minute periods

26. **Educational Technology (2)**
    - Technology integrated in all subject areas
      - o Functional, visual, too
    - Technology in career-tech – married with AP-type curriculum

26. **Physical Environment (2)**
    - Attractive physical plants and facilities
    - New facilities

26. **Variety (2)**
    - Builds on student passions
    - Variety of classes and experiences

26. **Fun (2)**
    - Fun
    - Get to do something I like

32. **Miscellaneous (13)**
    - Elementary and high school focus on what's important, more accountable
    - Alternative Schools (some work, some don't)
    - CIT- typically high end students get technology experience
    - Students at the top are generally well served
    - Title I school wide
    - Snacks in class at Vista Alternative School and had to clean up after self
    - 6 traits – rubrics
    - Recognize not perfect, but look for improvement
    - Meet needs of student and society
    - Second order change: to change a system, can't always build consensus – make hard decisions – based on best interest of the kids
    - People need to be in the right spot
    - Commitments to the non-negotiables
    - Discipline – decreased problems, grad rate increased, morale increased

WHAT'S NOT WORKING

1. **Challenges Facing Teachers (31)**
   - Secondary Teachers need training to teach way that we now want
   - Promote teachers that are intellectually curious – scaffold instruction
   - Teachers need support in developing their intellectual curiosity so can develop that of students, also need depth of content knowledge and conceptualize
   - Expectations for Teachers have changed – mismatch with their motivations for being teachers
   - Teachers, even new ones, haven't had instruction we want modeled for them
   - No collaboration among teachers – assembly like approach- can be creative
   - Lack of time/need more non-student contact time
   - Teachers have no experience outside school academia
   - Not enough time for teachers to be involved outside school
   - School boards need to give teachers, the PD they need and resources
   - Attract and retain more qualified teachers esp. in math, sci, and voc-tech
   - Conditions for teachers are barriers
   - Insufficient valuing of teachers
     o Pay
     o Setbacks
   - Teachers need to be more professional and stand up for the profession
   - Not enough people in teaching
   - Teachers overwhelmed by the needs of students
   - Teachers feel they are powerless
   - Teachers often not involved in Δ decisions
   - Being blamed, esp. when don't control
     o Not celebrated/celebrating enough
     o Leads to fear, distrust, misunderstanding
   - Teacher pride (lack of)/parent pride
   - Excuses
   - Schools are a place where adults can hide from the world – offers security
   - Status quo
   - Attitude
   - We see our students as products
   - Teachers voices aren't heard when policies are implemented
   - Teachers need to be supported with pedagogical content knowledge so they can motivate students
     o Weakness now- teachers aren't getting enough support
   - Teachers need to be able to collaborate more, using the arts, etc. to teach academic subjects – encouragement
   - How do we get teachers to be ethical, honest, etc.? Instill or chase out?
   - Standardized texts limit teacher passions, expertise
   - Not enough varied strategies within a block

2. Resistance to Change/Difficulty of Change (24)
- Don't want to change
- Comfort levels – hard to change
- Reluctance on part of the community
- Human nature makes us scared of change
- We have no choice but to change
    - o Competitive pressures will force change
- Hard to prioritize which change to take on
- We are in a process of change – groundwork
- Don't allow changes to be mandated by legislatures
- Non-educators are making major decisions – problematic, insulting, denigrates teaching
- But non-educators bring an important dimension
- Do we really want the change? Should we change?
- Schools are not keeping up with the changes in America
- Can't change a system where what they do is not valued
- Have to improve education before it will be improved so it will be valued
- Not enough standing up and fighting for kids and systems
- People are jaded
- Nation at risk – NCLB
- Idea of change
    - o Scary
    - o Additional work
    - o Stuck in a way been doing it
    - o Limited motivation
    - o Fear
    - o Being devalued
    - o Lack of professional training
    - o Inconsistency in requirements
- Policy makers make decisions that have huge ripple effect
- Students in affecting change – more interested in TV than real world
- Education is not filling of pail…it is the lighting of fires, afraid to let go of familiar – afraid of tapping into potential of students
- Dealing with issues of poverty feels not fixable
- We have an inability to be flexible to meet the needs of individual learners – legislative issues are related
- System so ingrained to "status quo"

3. Expectations – Too Low, Not Right Mix, and Not Held in Common (20)
- Expectations for students too low
- To low for future of US, too
- So many expectations piled one on the other
- Mentally average is good enough – need to raise all students
- More connecting between elementary-middle-high-college – to life
- Industrial model – learning/class are separate
- Learning does not make sense

- AP classes have common standards
- Not enough options for students – not all want to go to college
- High school needs to prepare students for college
- Need to develop thinkers who can articulate
- Teachers have different expectations of minority students
- High expectations for all
- # of students meeting expectations very well, but significant number still not meeting at all
- All kids are meeting someone's expectations
    o Their own fault, their families, communities
    o Bad fit of expectations and opportunities for success
- Expectations as a state are too low
- Disconnect between "industrial age" people and "information age" people
- Too often standards become least common denominator
    o Enactment of standards is tough
    o Math performance internationally – we're below where we should be
- Are the expectations fair? If so who else has to help??
- A [belief? (illegible)] that all students are going to college – but for what?

4. **Testing/AIMS (18)**
- Teaching to the test inappropriately
- AIMS – can't graduate if don't know how smart you are on one test
- More opportunities to achieve AIMS performance standards
- Are all AIMS standards appropriate for all students?
    o Esp. in Math
    o Make sure it addresses realistic needs and expectations and student have right to opportunity to pass
- If we want more accountability it could be driven by partnering with multiple partners, but one test doesn't capture everything we care about esp. regarding the permeation of technology which is not in school
- Disconnect between goal of enjoying school and need for remediation to pass AIMS
- We need to be consistent
    o Re: AIMS when it counts we (students, educators) respond
    o Need to trust our kids can do it
- Perceived imbalance of workload – esp. when subjects directly tied to AIMS
- No sense of shared respect for AIMS scores
    o But starting – i.e. requirements to incorporate reading and math into all subjects
    o Need shared burden re: editing, scoring, evaluating
- If kids pass AIMS, what incentive beyond?
- If kids fear will never pass AIMS what incentive to stay?
- Kids on IEPs but won't pass AIMS – what to do re: graduation? Esp. when they've worked so hard
- Worry that teaching will be focused just toward AIMS
    o That doesn't capture all the skills we'll need

- The broader community is more aware of AIMS than standards
- Accountability/measurability don't enhance the creativity of learning
- Schools identified as underperforming – but change in numbers doesn't necessarily mean improvement
- Paperwork, testing, looking just at numbers

5. **Money and Resources (14)**
   - Have to retool and don't have money to do it
   - Funding not getting to at-risk students at high school (Title I) most to elementary
   - Budget cuts
   - New way to fund schools – ADM formula
   - Budget- lack of $
   - Funding- not enough
   - Taxpayers to get more $
   - Money
   - Money
   - $
   - Smaller classes! "AZ sucks when it comes to paying for our schools"
   - Infrastructure- not using resources in the best way
   - Facilities
   - Time – money – space

6. **Not Enough Collaboration (11)**
   - Not enough communication/formal structures between business and education – need an ABEC-like structure
     - No occasion to communicate
   - Connecting to students to business communities
   - Need partnership between Community ↔ School
   - More collaboration K-20 education
   - Work with business community
   - Bus. And Ed. Advocate jointly
   - Communication between business and education
   - Bridges between neighboring schools
   - Interest
   - Misinformation – need complete accurate information
   - Rural, isolated, tough re: communication
     - Resistance, esp. when not involved
     - Difficulty getting away (subs)

6. **Parents/Family (11)**
   - Family support and structure not as strong @ sec. level, parental involvement is still important
   - Parents who are not at home because they are working
   - Lack of parental involvement
   - Family situations, problems at home – absence of families
   - Parent education on options

- Parent expectations
- Parents get kids to school
- Some groups of parents don't have expectations of their kids to go to post-sec – One school made sure each student took at least one college course
- Parent voices not heard – where do they go?
- Kids without strong family support
- Parent education regarding options

8. **Class Size/School Size Too Big (8)**
   - Large class sizes
   - High school too crowded
   - Size too big! (Schools within schools)
   - Large classes keep teachers unable to be flexible with kids
   - Class size teacher to student ratio
   - High Schools getting larger
   - High schools getting bigger
   - Larger schools, bigger classrooms make it harder for all students to feel engaged

8. **Schedule (8)**
   - Do all students want to go to school during traditional hours? Not flexible/creative enough with time frames
   - Traditional schedule system
     - Stuck with 8-4 system – community built around those hours
     - Flex hours
   - 6 classes a day- build in easy ones, too many to focus on
   - Calendar testing based on Phoenix
   - Year calendar- PVI South has gap
   - Restructure school year – more days
   - Traditional high school
     - Schedule
     - Attendance rules inflexible
   - Adding minutes and time will not necessarily improve achievement

8. **Low student skills/Students not academically prepared for high school/Too many drop-outs (8)**
   - Not strong enough regarding verbal skills
   - Not strong enough work ethic esp. with punctuality
   - Poor writing and math skills
   - Many high school students enter high school not at the traditional high school level
   - 30% of kids are failing AIMS
   - Some who aren't, some who are, too many aren't
   - Many students are not graduating from high school
   - Need more tutorial services

11. Traditional Grade Levels/Content Areas – Neither Fully Standards-Based Nor Focused on the Right Things (7)
- Age-grade placement and Carnegie units don't work
- Don't show connections across content areas, need to integrate as in real world
- Kids enter high school below grade level yet asked to instruct at that level
- Carnegie units – clocking in time vs. must meet this standard
- Renew emphasis on specifics of what students need to learn
- Feeder pattern means kids are prepared differently
- Class of 2010 will be the first class gone through system where standards permeated

11. More Connection to Work (7)
- Mindset that doesn't value/respect non-college bound
- Separation of college prep and vocational programs
- Providing appropriate recognition
  - Value for achievement of vocational students and teachers
- Vocations, career-tech – not enough emphasis on this too much about college prep – biz/school collaboration
- School is not practical enough
- Data from Regents regarding student preparation for increased education and from Businesses regarding employee skills; Lacking basic skills and work ethic
- Quality of people to graduate; Not present as a concern

11. Special Groups of Students (7)
- Preparation of low SES patterns of achievement- gaps widen as kids approach high school- Gap is a problem
- Still can predict outcomes based on SES
- Still have a group of students underserved – schools need tools
- Significant level of drop outs
- At both ends – students who excel and students who struggle- both need more support
- For example some never had student council, leadership roles
- Students with multiple needs served by disconnected programs

14. Students Neither Engaged in Learning nor School Improvement (6)
- Engage youth in renewal process
- Student have to take responsibility, too
- Lack of motivation among some students
- Lack of goal setting and vision
- Students are in school longer to meet new requirements
- Not see relevance of all high school classes (seniors)

14. Curriculum (6)
- Diversity of subject matters
- Coordination across
- Curriculum needs to allow for "circular" learning

- More emphasis in foreign languages
- A group of kids who don't know what they want to do – need relevant curriculum
- Curriculum may be dictated by text or test more than standards – some texts/tests are dark measures of standards

16. Mobility (5)
- Student mobility, especially between traditional schedule and block
- Seasonal mobility
- Mobile families
- Mobility affects academics and social aspects
- Recognize student mobility
  - o State to state
  - o On test reciprocity with state differences

16. Pressures/Lack of Guidance (5)
- Social challenges
- Social/emotional issues (adolescents!)
- External expectations
- More counselors – many things going on in lives- need someone beyond teachers to go to
- More guidance
  - o Over 4 years
  - o Over rough spots

16. Legislative process, outcomes (5)
- Governing board system
- Mandates – fed/state – non educators setting the mandates
- mandates from the top manage from bottom
- Regulatory burden – assessment as unfunded mandates
- All legislative requirements should be fully funded

19. Lack of focus (3)
- Do not have basic foundation
- Too many foci/subjects to focus on
- Trying too many things

19. Kids with jobs (3)
- Kids who are also working
- Too many students working outside school and too many hours
- Students who believe working is more important (culturally economically)

19. Limited technological infrastructure (3)
- Technology that is not up to standards
- Technology
- Do not use distance learning

19. Social promotion (3)
- Social promotion
- Remediation of students not on level – no funds
- Social promotion

23. Tradition (2)
- Tradition
- Historic focus on teaching, not student learning
    - Learning systems (IBM)
        - Focused
        - Based on data
    - learning styles

23. ELL (2)
- non-English speaking students
- Students who don't speak English

23. Accountability (2)
- Need to be held accountable in fair and equitable way
- Lack of formative assessments of education

23. Communication (2)
- Lack of articulation up/down – no communication
- Afraid to use word "tracking" – Voc Ed, don't get in fast enough

23. NCLB (2)
- Disparity regarding special education/needs – NCLB
- Too many students address educational mandates

23. Transportation (2)
- Transportation controls the school
- No field trips- not out in the community

29. Miscellaneous (20)
- We really don't know what we want
- Not many chances for students to hear from speakers in the community
    - Students will listen if relevant
    - Going to the business showed options
- Too easy to leave school early without getting the full benefit of school opportunity
- Choices start 6th grade and higher
- Education still reflects agrarian community of the past
- Should be more efficient
- Dual systems – consolidation and charters – efficient?
- Lack of ethnic diversity, flight
- Be proactive

- Safety issues for students and staff
- What is academic achievement?
- Don't have an organized plan
- My high school prepared me to do well in community college courses while I'm in high school – my peers, too
- What are we doing with kids in the middle?
- Cultural perception based in the past
- Not enough students choosing grad schools
- Providing adequate information
- We're doing "fair" – most high schools have some level of the "best"
- Most x (times) most x (times) some = (equals) fair

IDEAS FOR LONG-TERM RENEWAL

STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM (88)

Well-Rounded Curriculum (44)
- Change focus to learning system
- More time for cross curricular connection
- Provide vocational and <u>technical</u> education for every kid that desires it
- Electives in core classes (Social Psychology, Holocaust, Contemporary history, multi-ethnic studies)
- <u>All</u> elective; learn basic skills through electives; fewer courses but course require performance or exhibit or product (jury appraised)
- Teach life skills classes – relationship/marriage skills, budgeting/taxes/credit cards, character/leadership
- Reduce the math requirement except for kids that are going on that track
- Focus on relevant curriculum for reluctant students
- Students need to see connection between what they are learning and their future
- More "real world" teaching and student experiments
- Student centered
- More curriculum development and classroom management (teachers)
- P.E. a must for all (i.e. every year)
- Moving our instruction into quadrant D
- Curricular design
    o Restructure students as learning communities working collaboratively (like at work in the real world) with clear focus on specific action verb abilities
- Foreign language – start in 1st grade, we need fluent multilingual speakers to survive in today's world- economically and politically
- More exercises in oral communication
- Open communication with business and industry to help focus curriculum
- More modern lesson plans and books
- Alignment of curriculum
- Interdisciplinary relationship (how math is applied in science)
- Curriculum base for all levels
- Incorporation of reading focus in all areas
- Integrated core; same students have same English/mathematics/science/social science teachers so curriculum integration happens
- The organization and relation between each class and also between high school life and societal life. Example, more involvement in helping a student determine their plans after high school and how to prepare
- High school more practical
- Fund remedial programs for students who are behind in the summer months – including paying teacher reasonable salary
- More options for student interests
- Community based education

- By senior level expect service learning out of building experiences as part of the "finishing" high school
- Interdisciplinary study
- Development of learning communities based on the interests of the student
- Standards/Curriculum – similar between schools in district (substance and requirements)
- Provide students equal access to rigorous courses
- Allow/provide opportunities for online education self-paced curriculum
- Student presentations/exhibitions at the conclusion of projects
- Seeing practical (personal) use of what is taught
- Specialized courses for those who know where they want to go
- Flexibility in the student plan
- Create opportunities for curriculum development from K-12 to high school. Elementary, middle, and high schools agree on curricular goals and objectives
- Cross-curricular projects to include standards needed next – with presentations
- Integrating curriculum – not teaching math and English separately
- Students part of developing their own personalized curriculum
- Create experimental integrated courses to pilot at several schools, teachers would collaborate and receive training in partnership with university programs

Diversity/ ELL/Multicultural Learning (10)
- True multicultural curriculum
- More culturally inclusive education
- Better programs and more substantive training for ELL and Ex. Ed.
- Non-English speaking students need 7 special classes
- Greater attempt at increasing unity between different cultures on campus. Besides race, this includes different cliques and clubs
- Multicultural appreciation training
- Mandatory cultural sensitivity course work
- Improve high school in AZ – Increase diversity of leadership and staff in schools
- Teaching in multi-lingual styles
- Be open to cultural diversity – we all need each other

Career Focus (12)
- Establish Voc/Tech high schools
- Teachers with experience in jobs and available careers
- More voc/career education and training to join the work force
- More involvement with business and industry
- More world reality in classroom
- Have all students take a CTE course of study beginning in 7th grade until they graduate
- Improved integration of academic and career tech ed, workplace, life skills content
- Model the school around the community, i.e. [illegible?] – travel agency

- Real world internships/mentorships
- Applied knowledge programs – What you're learning in school you get to use in the work force
- Providing CTE options to students not planning on a strict college path
- Focus on helping students at risk move through school to adult work force

Standards (7)
- Higher educational standards within each school expecting all students to perform at whatever level
- Body of knowledge for the diploma
- Less focus on tests – more conceptual and practical learning (but still a need for standards)
- All students must meet junior high standard before entering
- Learn how to learn
- Eliminate "seat time" and the Carnegie unit
- Put more emphasis on character education, integrity, etc.

Learning Environments/School Climate (5)
- Create environments that are varied within high school, time, size, focus
- Help make learning fun, creative, and helpful
- Respect for self and for each and every person in the school
- Leadership focuses on successful learning environments
- Enforce the importance of education to all students

Life Skills (4)
- Life skills integrating into regular core classes, i.e. learning how to invest $ and the banking system in math
- Life skills
- Character counts/life skills
- Real life experiences

Extra-curricular (4)
- Have all high school students participate in an extra curricular program
- After school clubs and tutoring opportunities for high risk kids
- Not cut sports for the students
- More varieties of extra curricular activities

Student Empowerment (2)
- Student empowerment – ask them what they want to put on (? illegible)
- Student empowerment

IMPROVE TEACHING (57)

Teacher Professional Development (17)
- Teacher education throughout the career

- Teacher training as not only initial preparation but also ongoing focus
- More staff development
- State funding for PD and tutorial reimbursements
- Staff development on-going
- High quality professional support/ graduate courses for teachers
- More time for professional development
- Lengthen the teaching school year with at least 4 weeks built in for professional development and planning
- More effective professional development
- Train staff on basic greeting skills
- More development on innovative teaching techniques
- Focus on PD to address learning styles- perceptions
- Advanced curriculum training for teachers
- What if… increase in number of teaching/learning days (at least 200 days) +20 days of staff development
- Having all teachers be highly qualified – state funding for professional development and tuition reimbursements
- More schools offer staff development during contractual day
- Funded mentor for all new teachers trained in schools' particular delivery system

High Quality Teachers/Teacher Professionalism/Expectations (12)
- Reversing the tendency of Americans to view teaching as a "lesser" profession
- Have all teachers be highly qualified
- Highly qualified teacher requirements
- Return teachers to <u>respected</u> status, not service commodity
- Flexible scheduling; change in hours
- More support for teachers (good teaching)
- Teacher leadership training – focus on change
- Evaluation system focused on helping teachers teach better that is continuous, ongoing, supportive and timely
- Have teachers who are helpful and willing to take the extra time to help
- Train teachers to be data driven and yet remember that students don't care how much you know until they know how much you care
- Better teacher student relationships
- Require all schools have certified teachers

Teacher Preparation (9)
- Improving Teacher Prep: Have university methods professors teach high school classes for a semester
- improve secondary teacher prep
- Educate our educators
- Better teacher preparation
- Better teacher education
- Quality teacher preparation

- Closer collaboration between schools and teacher training programs
- Teachers should be more rigorously trained in the certification process in both content and practical applications
- Value contributions of teachers and attract the best and brightest

Teacher Collaboration (8)
- Find time for teachers to work together and collaborate without students- for example 2 weeks in the summer
- More time for collaborative work among teaching staff
- Dynamic peer supervision opportunities for teachers in order to stimulate more creativity in teaching
- Expect that every teacher of academic content area collaborate with either a CTE or fine arts teacher to develop context for the academics as a course of study
- Change the teacher load – teams
- Professional learning communities
- Teach teachers team building skills to value each other
- Develop professional learning communities for teachers within the Phoenix metro area

Teacher Incentives and Resources (7)
- Provide incentive for teachers who get grades in AIMS or other student achievement measurement and accomplish them
- Teacher incentives
- Offer incentives for teachers who try new programs, i.e. money to purchase supplies, needed, etc., often the teacher funds them on his or her own
- Give teachers more time and resources
- Increase salaries
- Better teacher pay to attract HQ professionals/more funding
- Funding that provides incentives for qualified teachers to excel in their classrooms (large increases in teacher/staff/admin salaries)

Teachers as Advisors (2)
- "Family schools"; long term advisor (teacher) pushing and encouraging students from start to finish
- Closer connections to teachers

Miscellaneous (2)
- Teachers to be there for students – no "evil" teachers- instead catch them for being good and reward them
- Include co-curricular activities as an expectation within the teaching contract to increase relationship building

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION (46)

School Schedule (23)
- Deliver instruction from early morning to late evening – accommodate learning styles and students who have jobs
- More flexibility for students to learn:
   o Schedule
   o Curriculum
   o Voc ed/career
- Change the school year- move to year round schools
- Year round calendar
- Change school year calendar
- Year-round schools with breaks that offer students other options
- More effective use of school year – rounded schedule
- Shorter breaks between vacations, but more vacations
- Move away from an agrarian calendar to a work based calendar
- Make a more flexible transportation schedule so sites could offer courses before and after school with transportation provided
- Later start for the day
- Later starting times and finishing times to allow for "wake up" time
- ATA – Let students practice on Sunday – remove 1 school day?
- Longer blocks of time with students
- Create flexible alternative structures within current high schools
- Innovative scheduling – aid student learning and teacher preparation
- What if… Flexibility in scheduling/delivery – Mon thru Sat, morning through night, traditional classrooms, and technological delivery
- Open school up for large periods of time so students could attend at night if they prefer
- Providing a more flexible schedule to help students and keep more kids in school
- Different scheduling
- Provide various scheduling opportunities for students or other learning methods
- Modern schedule times
- Flexible scheduling A/B

Smaller Schools/Smaller Learning Communities (10)
- Smaller populations for schools
- Creation of SLCs [smaller learning communities]
- smaller schools
- Smaller learning communities within larger
- Schools with a primary focus
- Smaller learning communities
- Deliver instruction in small learning communities – gateways/pathways, interest areas, relevance

- Small enough schools to allow full participation by all students – every student is a name and not a number
- Smaller schools – breaking big schools in to smaller local schools
- Create integrated learning settings where student/teacher ratio is smaller and learning is connected

Lower Class Sizes (8)
- Smaller class sizes
- Smaller classes
- Smaller class size, 1 on 1 communication/respectful
- Lower student-teacher ratio
- Smaller class groups
- Smaller class size
- Mandate school classroom size to 20 max
- A smaller student to teacher ratio

Time (3)
- Longer time for high school learning (Gr. 10-13 now high school grades)
- Flexible use of time as appropriate for learning
- More time in class periods

Dual Enrollment (2)
- Business – Community College partnerships
- Allow seniors to take college classes

INSTRUCTION (28)

Individualize Instruction (14)
- Student led IEPs/Conference; ability to self-advocate; standards for success can be different
- Differentiated instruction
- A curriculum that would allow for individual differences not a factory model (IEP)
- Supplemental tutoring for all achieving students
- Each child has an IEP
- More individualized time for instruction and encouragement
- More personal instruction time in class to reduce homework
- Collaboratively develop an individualized learning plan for each student
- Develop appropriate individualized education plans supported by
  - Student
  - Faculty
  - School
  - Community
- Assessing individual needs of students and addressing them
- Create a means by which the unique gifts of each child can be identified and nurtured

- Offering alternative paths for success of students
- Training for all teachers on individualizing
- Be serious about *all*

Instructional/Educational Technology (4)
- Use of technology for distance learning
- Increased technology and technological training for teachers
- Increase the use of technologies
- Significantly enhance/update the technological facilities for learning used by teachers and students everyday

Mentoring (3)
- Assign one mentor for every student at risk of failing; to attend to that student on and off campus
- More mentoring programs and efforts
- Reduced teaching loans for new teachers, allowing them time to observe others, have formal reflection, develop lessons, etc.

Peer Tutoring (3)
- Peer tutoring
- Peer counseling, tutoring and mentoring programs
- Teach Spanish and Navajo speaking students the "coaches" for Anglo students taking Spanish and Navajo

Tutoring (2)
- Funding for after school tutoring in schools that are not Title I
- Every student has access to a tutor

Miscellaneous (2)
- Hands on experience
- Teach "why" as opposed to "how"

RESOURCES (20)
- Increase per-student funding!!
- More money for better facilities and supplies
- No unfunded mandates
- More $ per student expended
- Provide the resources we need
- Increase school budgets significantly (x3)
- Appropriate salary for educators
- More financial support to the charter schools from people other than the parents
- Budget/funding – allow more $ for special programs, the humanities and supplies and field trips
- Fixing the guidance program because counselors are over burdened and stretched too thin – again this is a $ problem

- Create a business/facility manager position to allow principal and AP's to spend time as instructional leaders
- Coherent consistent goals with $
- More funding provided to disadvantaged – feed children, healthy food (b-fast and lunch)
- Funding
- Work to change public perception that teachers and administrators are overpaid and therefore do not deserve more funding
- Different funding process state/district
- Funding reflective of "learning" not time
- Increase funding for literacy programs
- Equity in facilities funding, no matter the size or location of the school
- Fund remedial programs for students who are behind in the summer months (including paying teachers reasonable salaries)

PARENTAL SUPPORT (20)
- More parental involvement
- Bringing in parents and encouraging participation and their support of students
- Gain parent buy-in that their child's education is valuable and needs to be diligently supported
- Better parental involvement in schools
- True parental involvement and support for schools
- Successful ideas for connecting parents
- Fund more parent education at the school sites, i.e. everything from crafts to ESL to get more parents involved in the schools and their children's education
- Parents play a real role in the school (drop outs particularly)
- More parental involvement
- Parent support/education for high risk children
- Effective parental school compacts
- More parent/teacher communication
- For minority students to succeed they need to belong, feel valued, and their parents need to feel the same as well as understand how an education is important. Is our current education important to them (valued by them)?
- Find a way to get more parents/families involved in school/class activities
- Successful ideas for connecting parents
- Fund more parent education at the school sits, i.e. everything from crafts to ESL to get more parents involved in the school and their children's education
- Parents play a real role in the school (Drop out prevention)
- More parent involvement
- Technology – able to communicate with parents students more timely, e-rate
- Increase parental awareness of success of students depends on parental involvement, close tie to what's going on

ALLIES – Collaboration/Advocacy/Partnerships (20)
- Business and industry involvement
- Build/improve relationships and involvement with local businesses

- Build/improve relationships with higher education
- Really more on local control of schools than political
- Business and education united for school renewal
- Creating collaboration with all stakeholders- community, schools, students, state dept, business and industry, etc.
- Legislative advocacy for school renewal
- Voc/Tech awareness/training for students and parents
- Businesses give time off for parent teacher conferences
  - Pay student workers to do homework
  - Set up own literacy training
- Create venues to get business and education to work together
- Reaching out to students
- Increase collaboration with University of AZ – Pima
- More supportive parents, teachers, and board for encouragement
- Build partnerships with students, parents, and teachers/staff for goal setting
- More collaboration with parents, higher ed, and community/outreach efforts
- Cooperation between schools - sharing of resources
- Dialogue between business and education regarding needs
- Taxpayers insisting schools get funded
- University value role in partnering with schools – play meaningful role supporting the teacher
- Create partnerships with businesses within the community to develop some curricular priorities

IMPROVE TRANSITIONS INTO HIGH SCHOOL (9)
- Better transition into high school
- What if… offer more 9th grade differentiation for "failing" students (increase relevance, renew interest in learning)
- Mentoring programs for all freshman and red flag the students at risk with individual mentors
- Better bridge programs between middle school and freshman year (UHS boost)
- Improve articulation between MS and high school for the development of more effective transition
- All classes joined to make transitions easier
- Articulated sequence of instruction: jr. high → HS → University, in compatibility between schools and society
- Standards curriculum similar between schools and districts (substance and requirements)
- Cooperation between schools – sharing of resources

CONSISTENT ACCOUNTABILITY GRADES K-12 (3)
- Hold elementary schools accountable for high school entry performance levels
- Hold students accountable at each grade level for mastery of outcomes
- K-8 accountability expecting students to arrive at high school at appropriate level and ready for high school curriculum

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP (3)
- Leadership thoroughly understanding how to mold and improve the system
- Streamlined administration allows more student involvement and more control of the school
- Train educational leaders who embrace change and have skills and abilities in leadership

VISION (2)
- Restructure high school vision – survey community for needs/wants
- Create a compelling and elevating vision of N. AZ and what can be for culture (multi), economic (leader in alternate energy), and politically (safe and gracious space for all)

MISCELLANEOUS (13)
- Schools furnish private counseling for any student/family in need
- Continued growth in state testing and accountability
- Fewer mandated programs unless they are fully funded by whatever government mandated them
- 2 high school exits tests**:** Career Prep and College Prep
- Research based interventions/formative assessments
- Acceptance of students for who they are
- My district participates and is a professional learning community
- Research that supports change (smaller classes, integration, brain research, ways to transform ed for energy child)
- Need to make research available to classroom
- Acceptance of students for who they are
- Increasing Prestige of OM, Ed, SKI, Teach
- Have out-of-level testing for exceptional ed and ELL students (or higher test in their own language)
- Attitude change

FORCES CREATING CONDITIONS FOR CHANGE

Challenges Facing Students (5)
- Poverty- Maslow's hierarchy of needs
- Haves and have nots – getting wider due to math phobias
- Transient students – mobility
- Divorce rate
- Being a single parent

Testing and Accountability (4)
- AIMS forced renewal emphasis on academics, forced aligned curriculum between content area standards – consistency
- Accountability/measurability don't enhance the creativity of learning
- NCLB
- Federal mandates

Ready for Change (3)
- Superintendent ready for change
- Supportive business and industry and community college
- Discussions like this are good sign – bring stake holders

Charter Schools Demonstrate Readiness to Change(2)
- Charter movement
- Competition from charter schools

Culture and Language (2)
- Culture and language
    o Communal
    o Dependence
    o Need to save language
- Language and tools don't always match

New Expectations (2)
- High schools were not expected to graduate everyone – that has changed our focus
- Economics – world competitiveness

Miscellaneous (7)
- Funding
- Technology
- Allow district to join caveat program
- Need some change (variety)
- Hearing from students – working earlier – more options
- Ballot issue → wld
- Difficulty of "fit"

WHAT ELSE SHOULD BE ON THE TABLE?

- Latino community
- Rural ed
- Urban ed
- Fact regarding status- where are we
- Make case statement
- Nutrition, health, outside activities (video games)
- Economic issues
- Special Ed
- Gifted
- Advocacy in state legislature
- Role of strong leadership
- Adult basic education
- Revisiting graduation requirements for IEP students
- Issue of resources, reallocations, strategies
- Conversation, presence of state-fed @ local end
- $
- Buildings
- Wages
- Class size
- Consolidation/Unification
- Not talked about private high schools re: expectations
- Ruby Payne's understanding of poverty

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

Over-Arching/Framework Issues

- In past, was okay to "throw away" kids—now <u>not</u> okay—changes whole focus
- Kids can do more than we are expecting
- 78% of businesses in Yuma are 6 employees or less
- Use data from inventories of students
- Proposal for Navajo nation to take over education, Navajo community not totally for it
- Be cautious about throwing out everything that is old

"Parking Lot"

- High school is for everyone – meet every need, interest, wish
- Graduation is end
- High school <u>is</u> life
- Happens in pockets
- Difficult to translate ed jargon

Appendix 2 – Focus Group Participants

Following is a listing of participants in each of the four regional focus groups.

<u>Yuma Participants List</u>

Ashley Amezcua
Student Body President
Yuma High School

Toni Badone
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Governing Board Member
Parker Unified School District #27

Norm Champagne
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Charlene Fernandez
Parent

Tim Foist
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Kayla Hughes
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Amber Kromer
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Gina Leonard
Assistant Principal, Academic Affairs
Yuma High School

Alba Lopez
Student
Vista High School

Justin Lujan
Freshman
Yuma High School

Chris Magdaleno
Principal
Vista School

Dick Mangis
Controller
Dong Mellon Farms, Inc.

Marvin L. Marlatt
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Governing Board Antelope Union High
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Naomi Mortezuma
Student

Brenna Paulin
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Crane Governing Board

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Angelica S. Ron
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Yuma Participants, cont.

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Executive Director
Yuma County Chamber of Commerce

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Tom Tyree
Yuma County Superintendent

Yovana Warren
PPEP-TEC High School

Samantha York
Senior
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Innovative and Exemplary Programs
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Huck Fitterer
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Tucson Participants List

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Chair/Teacher
TUSD

Linda L. Arzoumanian
Pima County School Superintendent
Office of the Pima County School
Superintendent

Stuart F. Baker
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University High School

Marilee Beach
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Appendix 3 – Focus Group Goals and Agenda

**Regional Focus Group on
High School Renewal**

Purpose, Goals, and Agenda

October 2004

<u>**Purpose and Goals of the Focus Group**</u>

*The purpose of the Yuma Focus Group on High School Renewal is **to clarify the unique Arizona context for high school renewal by eliciting stakeholder perspectives on Arizona's expectations, needs, opportunities, and challenges related to high school improvement**.*

In particular, by the end of the day, Focus Group participants will have had opportunities to:

- Articulate needs of and expectations for high school students and the system of high schools in Arizona;

- Generate ideas – grounded in experience – for improvement activities that might work in Arizona's high schools; and

- Identify challenges related to high school improvement and areas where schools, communities, or students may not be ready for particular types of activities.

<u>Focus Group Agenda</u>

A. Welcome and Introductions

B. Background, Purpose, and Goals of the Focus Group

C. Ground Rules

D. Brainstorming Question

E. Break

F. Breakout Groups

G. Comment Form

H. Break

I. Reconvene in General Session to Process and Summarize

J. Plus-Delta (Group Evaluation)

K. Individual Evaluation Forms

L. Closing Remarks and Thank You's

Appendix 4 – Evaluative Data

- ➢ **Overall Rating** – Processes used, chance to be heard, motivational aspects
    - ➢ **4.3**, on the scale 1=Poor; 3=Average; 5=Excellent

- ➢ **Delivery** – Agenda, mix of small and large discussions, amount of time, facilitation, customer service, meeting times
    - ➢ **4.04**, on the scale 1=Poor; 3=Average; 5=Excellent

- ➢ **Materials** – Usefulness, Quality, Quantity, Readability and Organization
    - ➢ **3.85**, on the scale 1=Poor; 3=Average; 5=Excellent

- ➢ **Facilities and Logistics** – Registration, facilities, sound quality, seating, view of participants, facilitators, screen, flip charts, refreshments & meals
    - ➢ **3.77**, on the scale 1=Poor; 3=Average; 5=Excellent

- ➢ **Met the Goals?** – To articulate needs and expectations for high school, generate ideas for improvement, identify challenges or areas where we aren't ready
    - ➢ **3.7**, on the scale 1=Poor; 3=Average; 5=Excellent

Words of Improvement:

- "…we need to really define what is broken before we discuss what "fixes" are."
- "Yes, it will get perspectives heard. We only scratched the surface."
- "I believe the team will review the results – Change may not be as easy."
- "Report will be heard but acted upon is a different story."
- "A little intimidated by participants who are in the schools. Hesitant to be too critical."
- "Most important thing was confidentiality so we could speak our mind."

Quotations:

- ➢ "Thank you for the opportunity. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to help." *High School Principal*

- ➢ "I want to thank you for allowing me to be a part of the AZHSRI Initiative process. I must admit, at first I was inclined to be on the defense for our public schools, particularly our high schools. However, in the end, I was pleasantly surprised with the focus group session and felt really good about the process and information gathered." *Governing Board Member*

Appendix 5 – Background on the Focus Group Process

Background on the
**Arizona High School
Renewal and Improvement Initiative**
(AZHSRI)

The Arizona Department of Education is pleased to announce that the Arizona High School Renewal and Improvement Initiative (AZHSRI) is underway! To gather information about needs, opportunities, and challenges of high school improvement in Arizona, a series of Regional Focus Groups will be conducted during the month of October, 2004.

AZHSRI Regional Focus Groups:

October 14-19, 2004, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) will be conducting with WestEd[2] an ***independent, participatory statewide needs assessment in order to better define the AZHSRI agenda***. The needs assessment will take place through background research and a series of four Regional Focus Groups.

The purpose of the Regional Focus Groups is to clarify the unique Arizona context for high school renewal.

ADE will invite a diverse set of approximately thirty stakeholders to the table in each of four communities across the state (Yuma, Tucson, Flagstaff, and Phoenix) to take part in the Focus Groups. Participants will be asked to share perspectives on their needs and expectations related to Arizona's high schools and high school improvement.

ADE and WestEd have contracted with West Wind Enterprises[3] to help design, conduct, and report on the Regional Focus Groups. The report written after the Focus Groups will detail:

- Needs articulated in the Focus Groups;
- Ideas for renewal activities that might work in Arizona's schools and communities; and
- Areas where groundwork must be done before actions will take hold.

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[2] *WestEd is a nonprofit research, development, and service agency, which operates, among numerous other programs, the federal Regional Educational Laboratory that serves the state of Arizona. www.wested.org*

[3] *West Wind Enterprises is a small consulting company offering professional development and research support for state education leaders engaged in strategic planning, policy development, and stakeholder engagement.*

Focus Group Partners:

ADE and WestEd are pleased that Arizona's various statewide associations of education leaders are partnering on the Regional Focus Groups. Focus Group partners provide advice and support in the planning of the Focus Group sessions, as well as assistance in selecting potential Focus Group Participants. Partners in the Focus Group effort include:

- Arizona Association of Student Councils
- Arizona Business & Education Coalition
- Arizona Charter Schools Association
- Arizona Education Association
- Arizona Federation of Teachers
- Arizona Minority Education Policy Analysis Center
- Arizona School Administrators
- Arizona School Boards Association
- Center for the Future of Arizona
- Greater Phoenix Leadership - Education Initiative
- Rodel Charitable Foundation of Arizona

Faculty at Arizona's community colleges and state universities were also supportive in the pulling together of the Regional Focus Groups.

How AZHSRI Came About:

October 2003: Arizona sent a team of education leaders to the U.S. Department of Education's *High School Leadership Summit* in Washington, DC.

April 2004: The U.S. Department of Education convened a Regional Summit on high school reform in Phoenix, issuing a call to states in our region to address challenges and opportunities facing our high school students and schools. The *Arizona State Team* on high school reform met for the first time at this Summit.

July 2004: The *State Team* met to create a proactive effort to improve high school student outcomes. At this meeting, the State Team began discussing plans for the Arizona High School Renewal and Improvement Initiative (ASHSRI).

August 2004: The Arizona Department of Education received support from both the U.S. Department of Education and WestEd to convene a series of Regional Focus Groups in four locations across the states to conduct a needs assessment of key stakeholders in high school reform.

AZHSRI Activities, Phase One:

Phase One: *The development of a statewide vision and action plan for high school renewal and improvement in order to raise academic achievement, increase the number of high school graduates, and increase post-secondary attendance and completion.* The action plan will include steps that we can take to foster the initiative.

> **October 2004:** *Regional Focus Groups*
> **November 2004:** Release of the Focus Group *Report*
> **November/December 2004:** *State Team Meeting*
> **December 2004-February 2005:** Ongoing *related activities**
> **February 2005:** *State Team Meeting*

AZHSRI Activities, Phase Two:

Phase Two: *Implementation of the statewide action plan for high school renewal and improvement!*

> **Spring/Summer 2005:** *AZHSRI Statewide Summit*
> **Next Steps:** *To be determined!!*

* Related Activities:

Fall 2004/Winter 2005: The Arizona Business and Education Coalition (ABEC) will be conducting a series of public engagement forums around the state in the fall of 2004 and winter of 2005, in order to gather additional data and build public support for high school renewal.

February 2005: The Arizona School Administrators received a *Breaking Ranks II* (BRII) grant from the National Association of Secondary School Principals to convene a BRII Summit in February 2005.

March 2005: The Arizona Department of Education, in partnership with the Center for the Future of Arizona and the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network, will host a national dropout prevention conference. This is an opportunity for educators to expand their knowledge of issues and program strategies to increase high school graduation rates.

For More Information:

For more information on AZHSRI, contact **Karen Butterfield** at the Arizona Department of Education (KButter@ade.az.gov).

For more information on the Regional Focus Groups, contact Karen, **Paul Koehler** at WestEd (pkoehle@wested.org), or **Circe Stumbo** at West Wind Enterprises (circe@west-wind.biz).

Initial Priorities

of the

Arizona High School Renewal and Improvement Initiative (AZHSRI) State Team

and the

<u>Arizona State Superintendent of Education</u>

- AIMS intervention

- High School Literacy/Reading

- Lowering the dropout rate/Increasing # of graduates

- Rich, comprehensive content-based curriculum that includes CTE and the arts

- Rigor in the curriculum

- Dissemination of high school reform models

- Data driven decision making

Connecting *Breaking Ranks II* Recommendations in High School Renewal
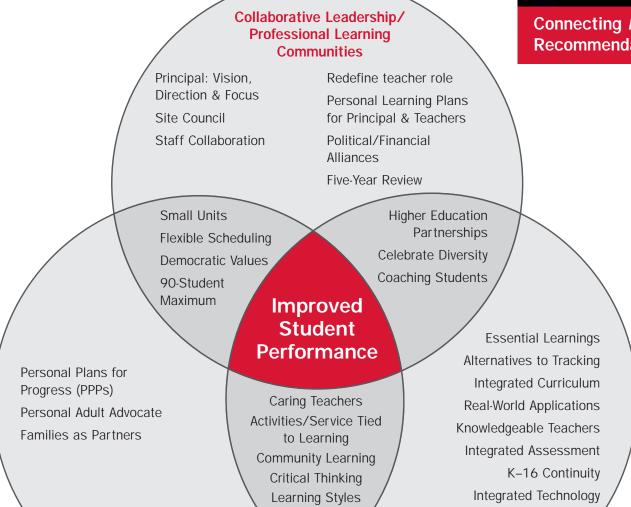

Connecting *BRII* Recommendations

Collaborative Leadership/ Professional Learning Communities

Principal: Vision, Direction & Focus

Site Council

Staff Collaboration

Redefine teacher role

Personal Learning Plans for Principal & Teachers

Political/Financial Alliances

Five-Year Review

Small Units

Flexible Scheduling

Democratic Values

90-Student Maximum

Higher Education Partnerships

Celebrate Diversity

Coaching Students

Improved Student Performance

Personal Plans for Progress (PPPs)

Personal Adult Advocate

Families as Partners

Caring Teachers

Activities/Service Tied to Learning

Community Learning

Critical Thinking

Learning Styles

Youth Services

Essential Learnings

Alternatives to Tracking

Integrated Curriculum

Real-World Applications

Knowledgeable Teachers

Integrated Assessment

K–16 Continuity

Integrated Technology

Personalizing Your School Environment

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Diagram by John Clarke, Steering Group, Vermont's "High Schools on the Move"

We have identified 15 effective strategies that have the most positive impact on the dropout rate. These strategies have been implemented successfully at all education levels and environments throughout the nation.

School and Community Perspective

- **Systemic Renewal**
  A continuing process of evaluating goals and objectives related to school policies, practices, and organizational structures as they impact a diverse group of learner.

- **School-Community Collaboration**
  When all groups in a community provide collective support to the school, a strong infrastructure is sustains a caring supportive environment where youth can thrive and achieve.

- **Safe Learning Environments**
  A comprehensive violence prevention plan, including conflict resolution, must deal with potential violence as well as crisis management. A safe learning environment provides daily experiences, at all grade levels, that enhance positive social atitudes and effective interpersonal skills in all students.

Early Interventions

- **Family Engagement**
  Research consistently finds that family engagement has a direct, positive effect on children's achievement and is the most accurate predictor of a student's success in school.

- **Early Childhood Education**
  Birth-to-five interventions demonstrate that providing a child additional enrichment can enhance brain development. The most effective way to reduce the number of children who will ultimately drop out is to provide the best possible classroom instruction from the beginning of their school experience through the primary grades.

- **Early Literacy Development**
  Early interventions to help low-achieving students improve their reading and writing skills establish the necessary foundation for effective learning in all other subjects.

Basic Core Strategies

- **Mentoring/Tutoring**
  Mentoring is a one-to-one caring, supportive relationship between a mentor and a mentee that is based on trust. Tutoring, also a one-to-one activity, focuses on academics and is an effective practice when addressing specific needs such as reading, writing, or math competencies.

- **Service-Learning**
  Service-learning connects meaningful community service experiences with academic learning. This teaching/learning method promotes personal and social growth, career development, and civic responsibility and can be a powerful behicle for effective school reform at all grade levels.

- **Alternative Schooling**
  Alternative schooling provides potential dropouts a variety of options that can lead to graduation, with programs paying special attention to the student's individual social needs and academic requirements for a high school diploma.

- **After-School Opportunities**
  Many schools are provide after-school and summer enhancement programs that eliminate information loss and inspire interest in a variety of areas. Such experiences are especially important for students at risk of school failure because they fill the afternoon "gap time" with constructive and engaging activities.

Making the Most of Instruction

- **Professional Development**
  Teachers who work with youth at high risk of academic failure need to feel supported and have an avenue by which they can continue to develop skills, techniques, and learn about innovative strategies.

- **Active Learning**
  Active learning embraces teaching and learning strategies that engage and involve students in the learning process. Students find new and creative ways to solve problems, achieve success, and become lifelong learners when educators show them that there are different ways to learn.

- **Educational Technology**
  Technology offers some of the best opportunities for delivering instruction to engage students in authentic learning, addressing multiple intelligences, and adapting to students' learning styles.

- **Individualized Instruction**
  Each student has unique interests and past learning experiences. An individualized instructional program for each students allows for flexibility in teaching methods and motivational strategies to consider these individual differences.

- **Career and Technical Education (CTE)**
  A quality CTE program and a related guidance program are essential for all students. School-to-work programs recognize that youth need specific skills to prepare them to measure up to the larger demands of today's workplace.

Works Reprinted in Appendix 6

National Association of Secondary School Principals and the Education Alliance at Brown University, *Breaking Ranks II: Strategies for Leading High School Reform*, (Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals).

National Drop-Out Prevention Center/Network, *Effective Strategies*, (Clemson, SC: National Drop-Out Prevention Center/Network), http://www.dropoutprevention.org/effstrat/effstrat.htm, accessed December 2, 2004.

Appendix 7 – Members of the AZHSRI Initiative State Team

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